



25 February 2022

To: **Principals, Subject Advisors, Parents, Teachers, Departmental Heads and Library Information Services (LIS) Coordinators.**

Topic: **Building back better through advocating for mother tongue at schools and in homes.**

Message Objectives are to:

- **Promote effective reading of mother tongue at schools and in homes.**
- **Promote reading for meaning through stories.**

Following the comparative data that was shared by the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2016, the National Reading Coalition has undertaken several interventions to promote reading in the mother tongue. Some of the interventions include the advocacy of read-aloud during reading days such as the World Read Aloud sessions; the distribution of storybooks in various indigenous languages and through learners' reading competitions.

Recently, the NRC collaborated with the Department of Basic Education and NGOs to promote the culture of bringing back the culture of learning better in mother tongue through the International mother tongue day.

While reading books in mother tongue is important, teachers and parents can use the activities below as part of promoting mother tongue at schools and in homes:

### **1. Animal and tree trail map**

A lot of books showing the types of trees and animals are written in Latin or English. Teachers and parents can use the animals and tree maps available to teach learners/children the correct names of the animals and trees through their relevant languages. It is also important for learners to understand the history of trees as most of them are used for medicinal purposes. For instance, I was taught by my grandmother that the barks of the marula tree are useful to cure stomach cramps.

### **2. Guessing Games**

With younger children who may have limited literacy skills, playing games is one activity that could be activated in any indigenous language. Children can be encouraged to think of a word in a language other than English and to try to select a word that other learner might find difficult to guess. Children find this task very enjoyable and most of them have fun using their mother tongue in front of everyone.

If learners can read with understanding in their mother tongue they will not struggle to write as well.

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